



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
FIRE DEPARTMENT

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**Tea Fire
November 2008
View From Fire Station #7
Stanwood Drive**

Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2013

My Mother used to tell me “it’s not the destination, it’s the journey.” She was also fond of saying “a journey of 1000 miles begins with just one step!” We have all heard these well worn adages many, many times, but when I look at our Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District (WFSAD) in this framework, I can see just how much *has* been accomplished since the district was formed, and just how much more *can* be attained if every homeowner would make just one Firewise improvement (see: www.firewise.org) in the next calendar year.



Since being formed in 2006, with the support and participation of our foothill community, the WFSAD has cleared over 2000 tons of vegetation to reduce fire fuel loads and has treated 108 acres through vegetation management. Over 88 miles of roadways have been opened up to provide better access for firefighters, and egress if needed for evacuation, and over 350 personalized defensible space inspections of your property have been conducted. Every dollar raised by the district is spent directly contributing to making your neighborhood more resistant and more hardened to cope with the potential of wildfire. We are well on our way towards making Santa Barbara safer because of these efforts!

Wildland fire spread is determined largely by the confluence of topography (lay of the land), weather (predominately wind) and vegetation. When all of these come together in a “perfect storm” of conditions, there is not much that any amount of firefighting resources can do to alter the course of history. What we can do, is alter the type, size, and arrangement of the vegetation that is nearby our homes before a fire starts. By changing the fuel available to the fire, we can dramatically lessen its impact on our community and our homes. A great example of what can be done is at our Firescape Garden, located across from Fire Station #7 at 2411 Stanwood Drive. Here you will see examples of plantings in a systematic zone approach that will simultaneously make your property more fire resistive, and also very attractive.

Many of you have already made a commitment, or first step, as individual property owners. Thank you for your understanding, support and cooperation. For those who have not already done so, I strongly encourage you to join your neighbors who have, and make a commitment towards taking the first step in our community journey. This first step could be as simple as pruning low hanging limbs to reduce ladder fuels or sweeping your porches, decks and roof areas to remove accumulated leaves. Every step counts along the way. After all, this is the journey of our lives!

Sincerely,

Fire Chief, City of Santa Barbara — Retired December 2012

YOUR ASSESSMENT DOLLARS PROVIDE FOR:

**Vegetation Management Projects • Defensible Space Inspections • Chipping/Brush Removal
Public Education & Outreach • Vegetation Road Clearance
Customer Service & Compliance Support • Hotline 805-564-5737**

2013 Defensible Space Chipping Schedule

Sheffield/Parma	March 4
Las Canoas	March 18
West Mountain	April 1
Westmont/Circle	April 15
Coyote Road	April 22
Las Tunas	April 29
Eucalyptus Hill	May 13
San Roque/Ontare	May 20
Sycamore Canyon/Las Alturas	May 28
Lower Riviera	June 3

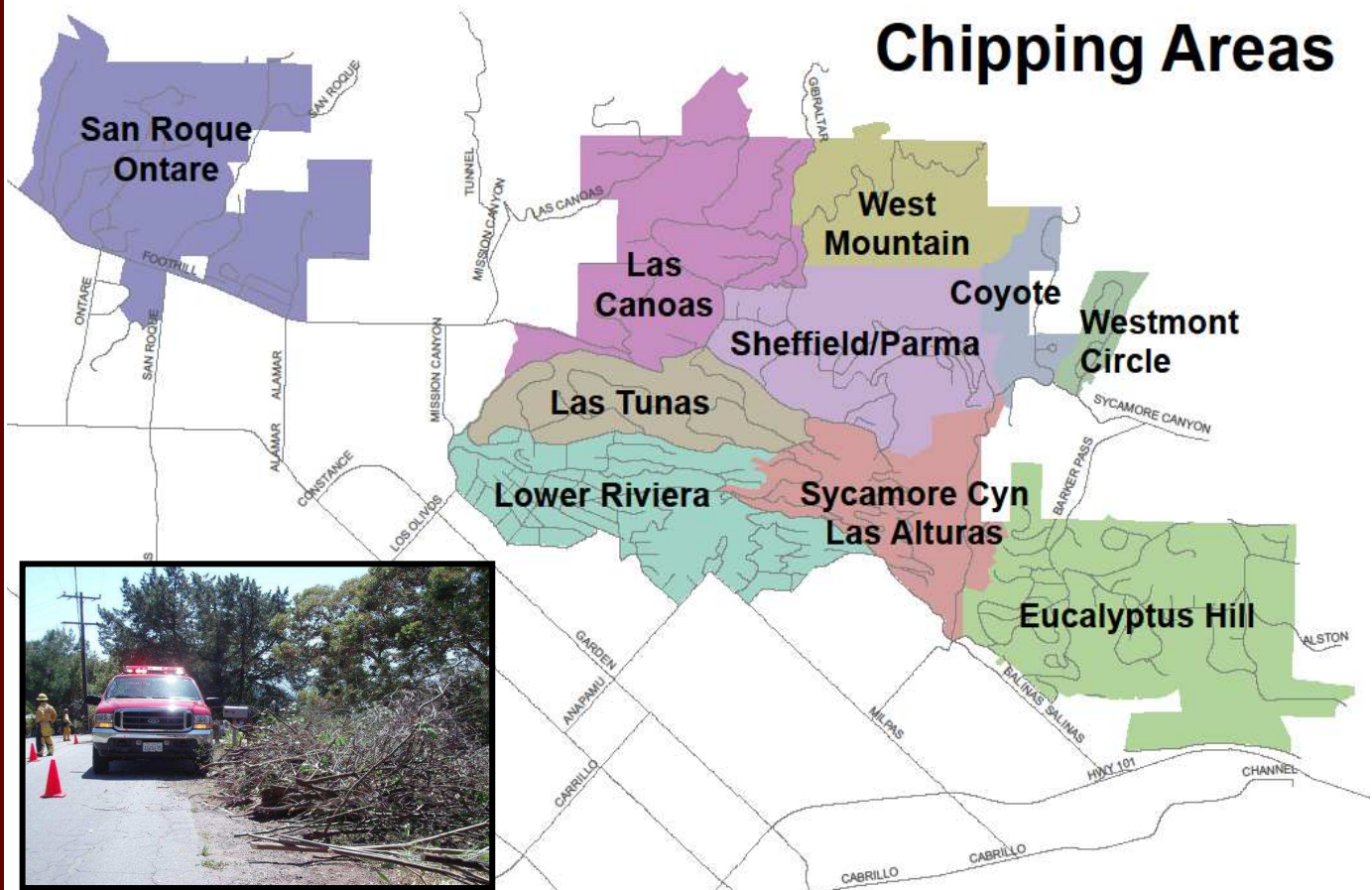
Vegetation properly stacked along roadway



Put your vegetation out on roadways **no sooner than two weeks** and **no later than the day of** your scheduled chip week (second passes will not be made).

Please refer to the map of chip areas below. For further detail visit our website or call us at 965-5254

Chipping Areas



Chipping Instructions

- Cut vegetation should be laid out in a pile along the street area outside of the drivable roadway.
- The cut end of all vegetation must face the street so contractors can easily handle material.
- Brush should be left in long lengths (4-7 feet). This makes it much easier to chip.
- Cut branches should be no greater than 10 inches in diameter.
- Material in plastic bags will not be picked up.
- Twine or string must not be used to tie vegetation.
- Rocks or other debris will not be chipped.
- Long piles OK as long as they are not over 4 feet in height.
- Old dead vegetation that has been lying around for years cannot be chipped (this type of vegetation damages chipper blades).
- Pine needles or other leaf litter cannot be chipped.
- Piles pushed or moved by mechanical means, i.e. tractor, cannot be chipped.
- Grasses, palm fronds, succulents or agaves will not be chipped.

Chipping services are provided to encourage property owners to create defensible space and provide a cost effective way to dispose of cut material.

As part of the City's environmental efforts, our goal is to re-use 98% of all chipped material. To achieve this goal we need your help. If you can use chips on your property please contact us at (805) 965-5254.

There are very specific requirements of what can be chipped. The chipping instructions (above) outline the specific requirements. Vegetation that does not meet these requirements will not be chipped and will be left on site. The property owner will be responsible for the legal disposal of any material that cannot be chipped.



Exotic pest plants that will NOT be chipped include:



Arundo
All species of ivy
Castor bean
Fennel
French/Soft/Scotch/Spanish broom
Ice plant
Tobacco weed
Pampas grass
Fountain grass
Mediterranean grass
Tamarisk
Any kind of Bamboo

For a complete list see our website.



Defensible Space Requirements

- The City's "Defensible Space Clearance Requirements" mandate the clearance of flammable vegetation from any structure and public or private street that is on or that borders your property.
- The requirements for defensible space vary based on your wildland fire hazard zone.
- There are two high fire hazard zones within the WFSAD;
 - *Extreme Foothill Zone* - 150 feet of defensible space is required.
 - *Foothill Zone* - 100 feet of defensible space is required.**See our website for defined zones.*

If your property is not in compliance with the City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Chapter 8.04, at the time of inspection you will be issued a warning and your property will be re-inspected.

Your property must be in compliance with these requirements by June 15 of this year, and is required by law to stay in compliance year-round.

Voluntary Defensible Space Inspections

The City of Santa Barbara Fire Department offers voluntary inspections of your property to ensure that your home is protected. During a major wildland fire the majority of homes lost are not engulfed by the fire front. Instead, they are lost when fire embers find a weakness in your home and start a small fire that can lead to total loss.



Santa Barbara is known for its extreme fire weather and significant structure loss, as demonstrated during the Sycamore Canyon, Paint, Tea, and most recently Jesusita fires. In a wind driven fire there is no guarantee that your home will survive, but we can strive to make each and every home as safe as possible.

To date, we have provided hundreds of Voluntary Defensible Space Inspections with property owners throughout the district. Each and every one of the homeowners that have asked for an inspection walked away after the inspection with a safer home and more knowledge than before. We continue to offer this valuable service to the community.



What is involved in a Voluntary Defensible Space Inspection?

During a Voluntary Defensible Space Inspection we will meet on site with you and walk around your property. We will discuss your current landscaping and exterior building construction and assess its current condition for things that are beneficial as well as improvements that can be made.

We have provided a checklist, similar to what is provided to you during an inspection, on the inside back cover. Use that as a reference guide to assist you in your own defensible space needs.

We Are Here To Help!

For voluntary inspections please call 965-5254

Frequently Asked Questions....

Am I required to keep my property in compliance year-round?

Yes.

I don't use a fireplace. Do I still need a spark arrester?

Yes. It is required by law.

Should ivy and/or vines climbing on my house, trees and trellis be removed?

Yes. Ivy and other vines act as a fire ladder and make your home vulnerable.

Can you recommend some fire-resistant plants?

Yes. Please visit our website and remember that all plants that are listed require maintenance. In addition, visit the Firescape Garden located on Stanwood Dr. across from Fire Station #7.

Does fire-resistant mean that it won't burn?

Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.

I am concerned about a neighboring property? What do I do?

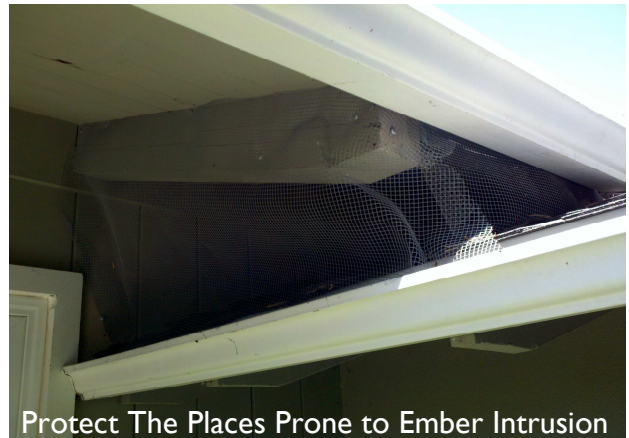
Call the Fire Department at 965-5254 to address your concern.

Can new building codes protect my home from a fire?

Fire safe building practices can't make your home fire proof but they can improve the chances that it will be standing after the fire.

If I request a Voluntary Defensible Space Inspection and the inspector notices that I am not in compliance will he/she start an enforcement case?

No. The intention of a Voluntary Defensible Space Inspection is not to be utilized as an enforcement tool. It is provided strictly for education purposes with a goal of helping homeowners achieve a more fire safe place to live.



Protect The Places Prone to Ember Intrusion



FIRE LOVES FUEL...

**It does not care if it is natural vegetation or part of a home.
It does not care if it is yours, ours, theirs, public or private.**

- Homeowners • Families • Neighborhoods • Businesses •
- Parks • Schools • City of Santa Barbara •

Working Together for Fire Safety, Prevention, and Preparedness



Effective fire prevention measures can keep fire from starting and reduce hazards that threaten you and your neighbors property.

The purpose of defensible space is not to promote the indiscriminate clearing of land. It is possible to create defensible space and retain the visual beauty, privacy and environmental health of your property. The Fire Department urges you to learn more about wildfire and what you can do to prepare for it.

For questions about how to make your home compliant with these requirements, or for more information on wildfire preparedness, evacuation and community involvement, please contact the Fire Department.

Meet your first weapon against wildfire...Defensible Space!

Defensible Space is....

an area around your home or structure free of flammable plants and objects that creates a zone in which firefighters can operate safely in order to help protect a home during a wildfire.

Cost Effective Defensible Space Tips

Reduce Fire Ladders: Separate and space your plants both horizontally and vertically.

Reduce Ignition Sources: Embers may blow miles ahead of the fire. Frequently check and remove leaves and debris from roofs and gutters. Check under decks and porches, deck furniture, play/storage structures, doormats, and potted plants.

Trees: Remove branches from the ground a minimum of 6 feet or 1/3 the total height of the tree. Remove all dead branches.

Brush: Remove dead fuel and limb up 2 feet from the ground. Keep separation between shrubs, brush and trees.

Grass: Mow down to 2 inches from the ground.

Debris Piles: Do not pile wood chips or mulch on your property. Spread and maintain to a depth not exceeding 4-6 inches. Compost should be kept in an appropriate container.

Ornamental Plants: Must be irrigated, maintained and pruned year-round.

The key factor in determining whether or not your home will survive a wildfire is **Defensible Space**. That is why a large part of wildland safety in the WFSAD lies in the hands of homeowners. It is imperative that your home is up to the City's defensible space requirements at all times.



◆ Fire safe landscaping is defensible space. It uses vegetation modification techniques, planting for fire safety, defensible space principles, and integrates a homeowner's aesthetic desires and functional needs for their property.

◆ A balance of colorful fire resistant plants, trees, shrubs, rocks, mulch and other landscaping materials will enhance the beauty and value of any property.

◆ Fire safe landscaping uses driveways, lawns, walkways, patios, water features such as pools or ponds, fences constructed of non-flammable materials such as rock or brick, and large boulders or rock groupings.





The buffer zone you create by removing weeds, brush and other vegetation helps to keep the fire away from your home and reduces the risks from flying embers.

Desirable Qualities for Fire Resistant Landscape Plants

- Ability to store water in leaves or stems
- Produces limited dead and fine material
- Extensive root systems for controlling erosion
- Ability to withstand drought
- Plants that are low growing in form
- Ability to withstand severe pruning
- Low levels of volatile oils or resins
- Ability to re-sprout after a fire
- Plant has high levels of salt or other non-resinous compounds within its tissues that can contribute to fire resistance



Photos Courtesy of GardenSoft and <http://www.sb.watersavingplants.com/>

Special attention should be given to existing ornamental plants known, or thought to be high hazard plants, that are located in close proximity to structures.

Examples include:

Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Pine, Eucalyptus, Juniper, and Pampas Grass

These plantings should be properly maintained to reduce their ability to transmit fire from native growth to any structure.



Santa Barbara Firescape Demonstration Garden

Located at the intersection Mission Ridge Road and Stanwood Dr., across from the City of Santa Barbara Fire Station #7 2411 Stanwood Dr.

The garden is open from sunrise to sunset daily and admission is free!

Vegetation Management



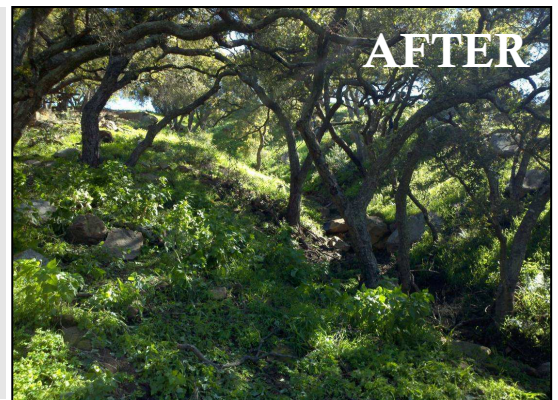
Vegetation Management is the reduction of hazardous vegetation from canyons and open areas where unique hazards and risks exist that pose a significant fire hazard to the community.

Vegetation management is focused outside a property owners required defensible space. The 2004 City Wildland Fire Plan has identified these Vegetation Management Units (project areas) within the district.

Each vegetation management unit requires the Fire Department to work with individual property owners and neighborhoods to accomplish education, assist with fuel hazard reduction projects, protect natural resources unique to the area, and help outline maintenance programs. By working in cooperation with multiple property owners, there is a greater impact on reducing the community threat from wildfire.



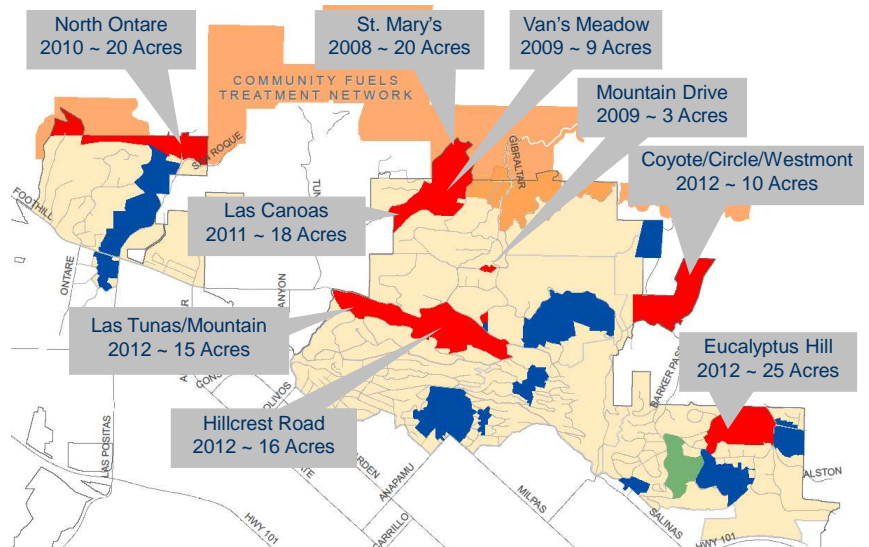
For information on how you can become involved in our Vegetation Management Program or for information on our projects please call 965-5254



Since the start up of the district, project crews have been very busy strengthening these vegetation management units (project areas). To date over 108 acres have been treated.

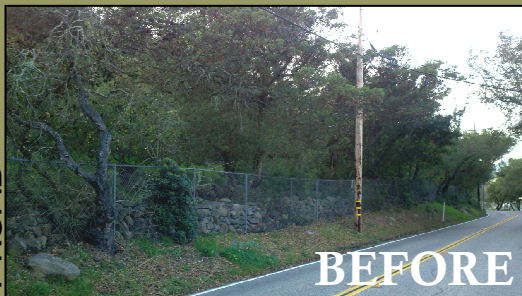
This map highlights:

- ◆ Completed projects (Red)
- ◆ Current projects (Green)
- ◆ Future projects (Blue)

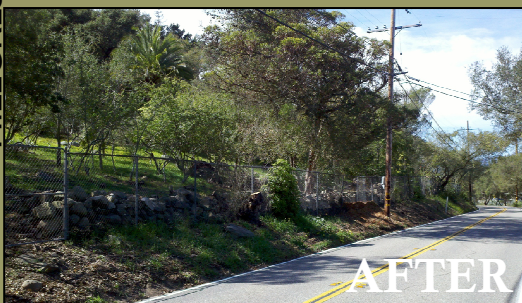


Santa Barbara 2010 Community Fuels Hazard Reduction Project

HILLCREST ROAD



BEFORE

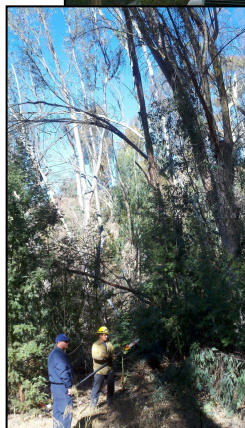
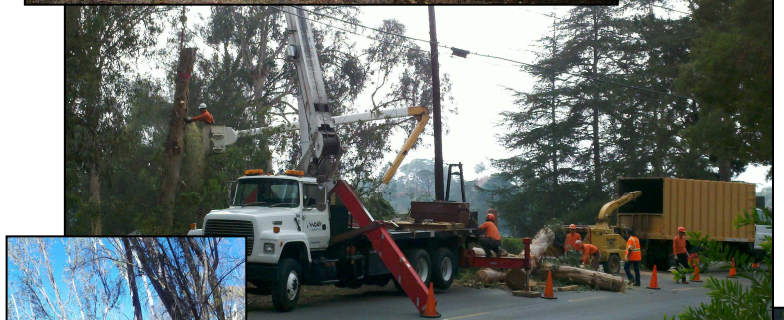


AFTER

In addition to WFSAD funds, vegetation management projects over the past year have utilized funding provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the Cooperative Fire Program of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, PSW Region, through the California Fire Safe Council.

This project involves reducing flammable vegetation throughout 4 project areas. Those areas include:

- ◆ Las Tunas/Mountain Drive
- ◆ Hillcrest Road/Franceschi Road
- ◆ Coyote Road/Circle Drive/Westmont Road
- ◆ Eucalyptus Hill Road



Coyote Road/Circle Drive/Westmont Road



BEFORE



AFTER

Vegetation Road Clearance

Purpose:

- Reduce the amount of flammable vegetation along roadways
- Enhance evacuation during a wildland fire
- Allow greater access for fire engines and equipment to respond during a wildfire

Over **15 miles** of vegetation road clearance completed this year!!

Santa Barbara City Municipal Code requires homeowners to make sure that vegetation on their property does not encroach onto adjacent roadways.

This effort includes thinning vegetation along the roadways and keeping evacuation routes clear of flammable vegetation .

It is very important to maintain the work that has been completed.

Keeping up our roadways is not only important for your safety and the safety of the community it's the law.



If you have a road that you feel needs to be addressed please contact us for consideration.

Defensible Space Checklist:

**** Items in red are required annually under Santa Barbara Municipal Code 8.04**

ACCESS		
YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Home address visible from the street
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Home address made of fire resistive materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Directional signs as needed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are directional/street signs made of fire resistant materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If driveway is long, does it have suitable turnaround area
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gates and locks operable by fire agencies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetation cleared both horizontally 10' and vertically 13'6" from roadways on or bordering your property
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry grasses cut to 2 inches
STRUCTURE		
YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Class A roof
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tile stoppers at ends
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spark arrestors and 1/4" mesh on chimney
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boxed eaves and enclosed decks
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All exterior vents (attic, eave, etc.) comply with current OSFM standards
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Windows dual paned with 1 pane tempered
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure has noncombustible siding
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decks and porches made of non-combustible material and free of easily combustible material (i.e. plastic furniture, seat cushions, shade umbrellas)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove wood piles and other combustibles at least 30' from house
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resident has smoke detectors, fire extinguishers & evacuation plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential sprinklers in operating condition
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rain gutters and roof free of leaves, needles and branches
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trees limbed minimum 10ft from chimney
DEFENSIBLE SPACE		
YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All flammable brush is lean, clean and green (limbed, pruned and maintained) within designated defensible space zone (30-50-70-100-150ft)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All fire ladders removed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry grass cut to 2 inches
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shrubs trimmed up 2ft or 1/3 of height, all dead removed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spacing between shrubs and clusters of plants
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All dead wood removed and trees limbed up 6ft above ground or as much as possible with younger trees
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trees limbed a minimum 10ft from eaves and roofline
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All dead trees removed from property
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Separation between trees and crowns
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	LPG tank clear of combustible material 10ft in all directions

We're on the web....

Our website is a great place to find links to fire safe landscaping, exotic pest plants, defensible space clearance requirements, and current events. Check the web for upcoming community projects and updates on what is happening in the WFSAD.

www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
FIRE DEPARTMENT

Blog Us!

<http://wfsad.blogspot.com/>

SBFD Facebook

[www.facebook.com/
santabarbaracityfire](http://www.facebook.com/santabarbaracityfire)

Santa Barbara County Fire History

Year	Fire Name	Acres	Homes Lost
1955	Refugio	84,770	Several
1964	Coyote	67,000	100+
1971	Romero	14,538	4
1977	Sycamore	805	234
1977	Hondo	10,000	0
1979	Eagle	4,530	5
1990	Paint	4,900	524
1993	Marre	43,864	0
2002	Sudden	7,160	0
2004	Gaviota	7,440	1
2007	Zaca	240,207	0
2008	Gap	9,445	0
2008	Tea	1,940	238
2009	Jesusita	8733	80



City of Santa Barbara
Fire Department
925 Chapala Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Living With Wildfire

Wildfire has always been a part of the Santa Barbara Community. The chaparral environment has adapted over millions of years with fire as a part of its ecosystem. Current and past fire exclusion and suppression policies have resulted in a large accumulation of vegetation throughout the foothill area. When wildfire burns in these areas, it burns with increased intensity and severity. As vegetative growth and development continues in our urban wildland interface areas, there is an increased potential for loss of life, structures and resources, both natural and economic. It is only a matter of time until the next wildfire occurs.

Preparation for the next wildfire requires you to take **personal responsibility** to protect yourself, your family, and your property. Many property owners feel that a fire truck will be there to protect their property. During a major wildfire there will not be enough firefighting resources available to defend every home. Consequently, the most critical person in preparing and protecting your life and property is not the firefighter, but **you**, the property owner.

Fire is part of our environment. Our brush covered hills, canyons and forests burned periodically long before homes were built here. People have moved into this environment, and many of us have built and landscaped with no thought of wildfire. Today's wildfires burn fast and seasonal hot dry winds drive fires even faster, making them impossible to control.

This newsletter should be used by homeowners, within the WFSAD, as a tool to aid individual wildfire preparation efforts.



Jesusita Fire 2009